

WASHINGTON, DC- With the 67th annual Greater Washington Soap Box Derby set to take place Sunday, June 22, on Capitol Hill, Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (D-MD) issued a statement applauding the participation of so many area youth in the annual affair that brings “the greatest amateur racing event in the world” to the National Capital Region. For the last 18 years, Rep. Hoyer has sponsored a resolution to permit the derby race to take place on the grounds of the United States Capitol. The Greater Washington Soap Box Derby will take place from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. on Constitution Avenue, NW, between New Jersey and Louisiana Avenues.

“I am proud to be a sponsor of legislation to enable our region's soap box derby racers to use the grounds of the U.S. Capitol to participate in this truly American tradition,” stated Rep. Hoyer. “The Soap Box Derby has been called ‘the greatest amateur racing event in the world,’ and lives up to that reputation by reaching out to our youth, and teaching them the importance of community, responsibility, and hard work.”

This year's derby includes 50-60 drivers between the ages of 8 and 17, many of whom are sponsored by local businesses and organizations. Racers are divided into three divisions: Stock, Super Stock, and Masters. The local winner of each division will automatically qualify to compete with racers from around the world in the 71th All-American Soap Box Derby in Akron, Ohio on July 26.

“We have had great talent emerge from this competition, including last year's winner, Kacie Rader from Southern Maryland, who went on to become the National Masters Division champion,” stated Rep. Hoyer. “I am confident that this year's race will be another tremendous success, and I look forward to working with the Greater Washington Soap Box Derby in the years ahead to ensure that this race continues to thrive.”

The origin of soap box derby racing dates back to 1934 when a photographer for the Dayton Daily News, Myron E. Scott, saw boys racing engineless cars down a hill, inspiring him to organize a race and award the winner with a “loving cup.” While the first race took place in Dayton, OH, in the following years, the venue moved to Akron on account of the numerous hills. With the hard work of countless civic organizations, a permanent track site for the youth racing classic was created with the assistance of the Works Progress Administration (WPA).

Soap box derby racing in the Nation's Capital has a long and rich tradition as well. In 1938, Norman Rocca beat out 223 other racers to win the inaugural Greater Washington Soap Box Derby, which was held on New Hampshire Avenue. Over the years thousands of the region's

young people have participated in this great race. The location has since moved from the original site on New Hampshire Avenue to Capitol Hill.

For more information see the All-American Soap Box Derby Web site at <http://www.aasbd.org/index.htm>

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